

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1769 without my signature.

We share a common goal on ensuring that California's students who have limited or no proficiency in English become fully proficient as quickly as possible. However, of equal importance is ensuring that all of our students possess the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and speaking appropriate to their grade levels, as defined by California's rigorous academic content standards.

I cannot endorse any effort which may lead to the creation of separate curricula and textbooks that will isolate these students within our public schools. This sort of segregated learning is not only detrimental to the language learning process – it would have a divisive impact on our children, classrooms, schools, teachers and our larger society. It undermines the very principle of inclusiveness that inspires so many entrepreneurial and hard-working immigrants to pursue the American dream.

I am still committed to working with the Legislature to restore funding for the State Board of Education. Unfortunately, the Legislature's choice to eliminate the board's funding accomplished nothing. In spite of that, my Administration has taken action to ensure that State Board operations will continue uninterrupted, so that it can continue to fulfill its Constitutional obligations. It is my hope that the Legislature will approve a bill next session that restores the State Board of Education funding without attempting to leverage those funds to advance a policy agenda.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger